

The orderly appearance of my life depresses me.
 Certain days it
 seems to me unbearably hypocritical.

I am working now in the attic, where a large table is
 covered with
 the pages of my novel. Another, smaller one, in front of
 the window,
 stands beside the chaise-longue where I stretch out to
 read Stevenson.
 Here I am farthest from the sounds of the garden and
 of the house.
 Today it has been raining since I woke up; my only
 pleasure is read-
 ing and trying to work.

21 August

This title: *Le Cône d'ombre*²⁵ is suggested by a letter
 from Grol-
 leau, who asks me for a preface to his translation of
 Wilde's *Poems* in
Prose.

22

Marcel explains to me this evening that what keeps
 him from writ-
 ing is the almost equal interest that he takes in
 everything, his lack of
 any prejudice to urge on others. The minds that are
 carried away by
 enthusiasm in one direction have the greatest facility
 in speaking or
 writing; when too well balanced, thought prevents us;
 out of balance,
 it drags us far afield. It is the party men, necessarily,
 who talk the most
 in the Chamber of Deputies.

24

August

Nothing is consistent, nothing is fixed or certain, in
 my life. By turns
 I resemble and differ; there is no living creature so
 foreign to me that
 I cannot be sure of approaching. I do not yet know, at
 the age of thirty-
 six, whether I am miserly or prodigal, temperate or
 greedy ... or
 rather, being suddenly carried from one to the other
 extreme, in this
 very balancing I feel that my fate is being carried out.
 Why should I
 attempt to form, by artificially imitating myself, the
 artificial unity of
 my life? Only in movement can I find my equilibrium.

Through my heredity, which interbreeds in me two
very different
systems of life, can be explained this complexity and
these contradictions
from which I suffer.

25

August

Too much novelty dazzles us; we can appreciate in
others only
what we are able to recognize (just as the Barbarians
could make out
in the words we spoke only the letters they were
accustomed to pro-
nouncing); as for the rest, we do not even hear it. The
artists with the
most genius are understood only after their savor has
ceased to be rare;
the new values they brought, not being in circulation,
were not quoted

²⁵ *The Cone of Shadow.*